Lewis Terman and the Stanford-Binet IQ Test:



Lewis Madison Terman January 15th, 1877-December 21st, 1956

Born in Johnson County, Indiana

Terman had 6 college degrees!

--4 Bachelors degrees

--A Masters from Indiana University

--A PHD from Clarke University

Terman revised the Binet-Simon IQ test and released the “Stanford Revision of the Binet-Simon Scale” in 1916

He removed several of Binet’s original test items and replaced them with his own items

Terman’s revised test was used to develop the Army Alpha and Army Beta tests…

--Army Alpha was used for literate recruits

--Army beta was used for illiterate recruits  
High scores on these tests made recruits eligible for officer training

Low scores made recruits ineligible for military service

Terman did a longitudinal study on gifted and genius children, attempting to disprove stereotypes.

He found that gifted/genius children were not destined to be sickly, strange, antisocial adults—they grew up to be healthy, social, successful individual who married and had normal lives.

Following this study, Terman became an advocate for the early identification of gifted children.

Early identification, Terman felt, allowed children to fully realize their intellectual potential and also to overcome any personal disadvantages that would otherwise impede intellectual development.

Not all of Terman’s research was for the benefit of all involved, however…

Terman administered English tests to Spanish-speaking and unschooled African American children.

He concluded that not only were they unintelligent, but that their “dullness” was racial.

He suggested that they be segregated into separate schools and groomed for menial labor, being unfit to master abstract thought.

He went on to call their existence a “grave problem” because of their “unusually prolific breeding”.

Terman later joined the Human Betterment Group, a eugenics foundation.

Among other agendas, the Human Betterment group promoted and enforced the compulsory sterilization laws in California (at the time)

Compulsory sterilization laws targeted those with the undesirable heritable traits, such a blindness, physical deformity, mental retardation, and mental illness, and required that they undergo surgery to end their reproductive abilities.

Unfinished work…

--Terman died before his study of gifted children concluded. The study is still supported by Stanford University and will end when all participants die or withdraw.

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